2007

The role of peer networks in mediating and moderating racial disparities in youth violence

Louis F. Burdi
University of New Hampshire, Durham

THE ROLE OF PEER NETWORKS IN MEDIATING AND MODERATING RACIAL DISPARITIES IN YOUTH VIOLENCE

BY

LOUIS F. BURDI

B.A., University of New Hampshire, 2006

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

In Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

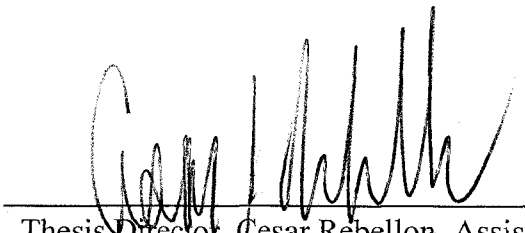
Master of Arts

In

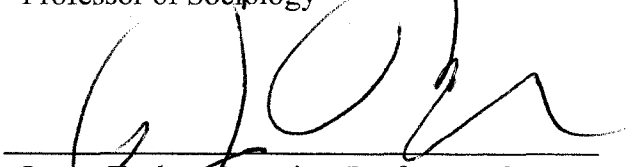
Justice Studies

December, 2007

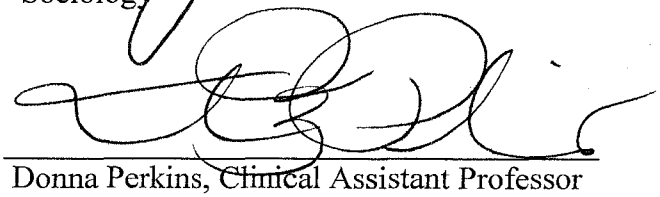
This thesis has been examined and approved.



Thesis Director, Cesar Rebellon, Assistant Professor of Sociology



James Tucker, Associate Professor of Sociology



Donna Perkins, Clinical Assistant Professor of Justice Studies

11/15/07

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF PEER NETWORKS IN MEDIATING AND MODERATING RACIAL DISPARITIES IN YOUTH VIOLENCE

by

Louis Burdi

University of New Hampshire, December, 2007

In the present study the influence of peer networks in mediating and moderating racial disparities in youth violence is examined using wave I and wave II of the National Youth Survey (N=1725). Data on peer attitudes and behavior, and individual self-reported incidences involving violent behavior were analyzed through a series of regression models. This study asserts first, that peer association and socioeconomic status mediate racial differences in violence; second, that an interaction between race and differential association and an interaction between race and socioeconomic status exist that affects violent behavior; lastly, an interaction effect will exist between socioeconomic status and differential association such that each influence the effect of the other on respondents propensities for violence.

INTRODUCTION

Prior research suggests that an association between race and violent offending exists with racial minorities offending at a disproportional rate compared to Whites (Huizinga et al., 1998; Loeber et al., 1998; Thornberry et al., 1998). Plausibly, this relation exists because racial minority peer groups mediate the race-violence relationship. Alternatively, because racial minorities tend to be among the population that is most impoverished, minorities may be more likely to be antagonistic due to their aversive social and economic conditions (Bernard, 1990; Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989). Ultimately, the influence of peer association and socioeconomic status could have a greater influence on Blacks than non-Blacks.

Although numerous studies have examined the relation between race and violence, only Haynie and Payne (2006) have examined the race-violence association from a peer network perspective. Furthermore, no research has empirically examined differential association as a possible explanation for the race-violence relationship. This study using data from the first two waves of the National Youth Survey, examines the relationship between race and violent behavior in youths with differential association and socioeconomic status providing possible explanations for racial disparities in violence. Moreover, race may also condition the magnitude of the relationship between differential association and violence. In sum, this research analyzes the relation between race and violence by examining whether differential association and socioeconomic status mediates and or moderates the race-violence relationship.

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship Between Race and Violent Crime in Youths

Several longitudinal delinquency studies examine the causes and correlates of youth delinquency. The Denver Youth Study used a sample of 1,527 boys and girls from high risk neighborhoods in Denver. These 1,527 boys and girls were a sample of 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 year olds in 1987 (Huizinga, et al., 1998). The Denver Youth Study found that over a 5 year period (1987-91) most of the Black youths in the sample were in fact both victims and perpetrators of violent crime (Huizinga, et al., 1998).

Loeber, et al. (1998) conducted research on 1,517 inner city boys from Pittsburgh in the Pittsburgh Youth Study. The sample consisted of first, fourth, and seventh graders from inner city Pittsburgh where 30 percent of sample were pre-screened students who exhibited especially disruptive behavior. The remaining 70 percent were a random sample selection of the remaining population. The Pittsburgh Youth Study found high levels of involvement in serious delinquency among its sample. No differences between Black and White boys were found at age 6, but differences gradually developed with prevalence of serious delinquency at age 16 reaching 27 percent for Blacks and 19 percent for Whites (Loeber, et al., 1998). Loeber, et al. (1998) also found that as prevalence increased, so did average frequency of serious offending, rising more rapidly for Blacks.

The Rochester Youth Development Study was another longitudinal study sampling 1,000 urban adolescents in Rochester, NY in seventh and eighth grade. Males and students from high-crime areas were over-sampled based on the assumption that they would be at greater risk for offending (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizzote, Smith, & Porter, 1998). Thornberry, et al. (1998) found that associating with delinquent peers was strongly and consistently related to delinquency. This has important implications for the present study because the role of peer networks in mediating racial disproportions of violence is being examined. Criminal violence is an enduring issue in urban America and this concern may not be equally serious for all communities. One of the more overt differences is between the violence levels of Blacks and Whites (Krivo & Peterson, 2000). Black violent offending has ranged from 6.2 to 9.5 times that of Whites over the past twenty years (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). Krivo and Peterson (2000) argued that one possibility for the racially differing rates of offending occurring is because the crime-generating processes are conditioned by the social situations of Blacks and Whites.

Possible Mediators of the Race-Violence Relationship

Socioeconomic Status

Paschall, Flewelling, and Ennett (1998) suggested that socioeconomic inequality has been implicated in previous research as the key factor that accounts for racial differences in violence (see also Blau & Blau, 1982; Hawkins, 1990,1993; Vold & Bernard, 1986). Racial differences in violence may be due to socioeconomic differences and appropriate analysis of racial effects require adequate controls for socioeconomic status (Hawkins, 1990). Elliott (1994) with results from the longitudinal National Youth

Survey posited that racial differences in violence varied across socioeconomic status, where employed Blacks and Whites had similar, continuous violent behavior in contrast to unemployed Blacks who were significantly more likely to behave more violently than unemployed Whites. It is certainly plausible that the nature of socioeconomic status has great influence on the violent behavior of people. Paschall, et al. (1998) found that impacts of socioeconomic disadvantage on violent behavior were clearly more profound for Black young adults than White young adults.

With regard to this present study, socioeconomic status could perhaps provide another explanation for differences in exposure to both violence and violent peers. Racial differences in violence may be a result of the lower socioeconomic status of African Americans. Exposure of low socioeconomic status youths to violent peer networks is potentially an alternative mediating explanation and or moderating effect for racial disparities in youth violence.

Peer Networks and "Social Embeddedness"

In the United States peer relations and friendship networks in adolescence may have important implications for understanding how particular groups of individuals, such as racial-ethnic minorities, face higher or lower risks of problematic behaviors (Haynie, 2001; Haynie, 2002; Haynie & Payne, 2006). Racial and ethnic groups are involved in violence to different degrees and evidence indicates these differences first appear in adolescence (Loeber, et al., 1998).

Aseltine (1995) found empirically that individuals are socialized into deviant forms of conduct through peer networks. The peer group's influence is emphasized by

fostering attitudes and beliefs favorable to problematic behavior and in the acquisition of the abilities and skills related to the performance of deviant behaviors (see also Sutherland, 1947). Historically disadvantaged ethnic and racial minority youths might belong to networks that provide social support and comfort and simultaneously encourage problematic behaviors. Matza (1964) characterized deviant peer groups as subcultures in which members inaccurately perceive group support for unconventional behavior. This unconventional behavior for some places an importance on being courageous and presenting this image to others, particularly for lower status group members (Markowitz & Felson, 1998).

Research suggests that African American peer networks are more likely to promote deviant and violent behavior than pro-social behavior because pro-social behavior does not yield positive resources (e.g. economic prosperity, social status, and acceptance) (Haynie & Payne, 2006). Social capital, which is a connection within or between social networks where members are inclined to actively reciprocate with one another, may also be important. Social capital is generated through the idea of social embeddedness, a concept that is defined as creating a two-way relationship where benefits are equally exchanged. Social embeddedness not only generates obligations and expectations for behavior, but also encourages the transmission of information, behavioral norms, and sanctions (Haynie & Payne, 2006). Peers within social networks begin to occupy a central role in transmitting and modeling deviant and pro-social behavior, offering a potent context in which norms governing problematic behaviors may come to operate (Haynie & Payne, 2006; Haynie, Silver, & Teasdale, 2006).

Haynie and Osgood (2005) articulated that in most social psychological accounts of larger social phenomena, normative influence or socialization from close associates is the key process by which individuals come to conform with the norms of their group. Researchers have argued that the members of delinquent peer groups are often socially disabled adolescents who associate with one another largely because of external threats such as rival gangs, police harassment, and assault (Haynie & Osgood, 2005). Agnew (1991) empirically found that youths interacting with peers engaged in serious delinquency saw significant increases in their own delinquency. Conversely, interaction among peers engaged in minor delinquency did not have any significant impact on youths' delinquency. This suggests that peer networks could have a unique influence on serious delinquency.

Mead (1934) explained how the self arises in problematic situations when an individual takes the role of the significant other and views oneself from the standpoint of others. Inter-actors who occupy similar positions in social structure are likely to share perspectives and communication networks and, therefore, display similarities in role taking behavior. Through taking the role of the generalized other, the organization of the group enters the cognition and behavior of individuals as they locate their positions and act according to the group norms and expectations (Haynie, 2001; Haynie & Osgood, 2005; Haynie & Payne, 2006; Haynie, Silver, & Teasdale, 2006; Mead, 1934). To clarify, taking the role of the generalized other means to conduct your own behavior and have attitudes based on the general actions and beliefs of your significant peer network. This creates a "self" that acts according to the way he or she should act based on his or her involvement in a specific peer group.

One's appraisals of self based on prior delinquent behavior are affected by actual appraisals made by significant peers where members of deviant peer groups are likely to see each other as "troublemakers" and create rationalizations for their behavior. It is difficult to suggest all members of a group will follow any other at any time, thus the situation becomes a matter of socialization where peers mock or ridicule other members of the group into adhering to group norms (Heimer & Matsueda, 1994; Warr, 1996). Essentially, youths' accept their roles as troublemakers because that is how their peer network is defined by the members within. Members of the deviant peer group rationalize that this is who we are, so this is the way every member of the group will be. If a group member veers from this rationalization, that member is derided until he or she follows the group norms.

Research has suggested that peer networks are more influential for some and less for others. With regard to race-violence associations, minority status does not imply a greater probability of embracing a subculture of violence (Agnew, 1991; Cao, Adams, & Jensen, 1997). However, Haynie and Payne's (2006) analysis of homogeneity and heterogeneity within peer networks has significant implications for the argument put forth in this study, which is that some races may be more susceptible to be influenced by the same level of delinquent peers. Haynie and Payne found that homogeneously Black peer networks increased the likelihood of violence. However, no significant effect was found for Whites, regardless of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their peer networks. Thus, race appeared to play a central role in some peer networks, but not necessarily in others. In sum, it is plausible to suggest that the role played by peer networks could explain the relationship between race and violent behavior. Furthermore, it could be the

case, as it will be discussed, that similar levels of differential association and socioeconomic status have greater influence on some races than others.

Possible Interaction Influences on the Race-Violence Relationship

Social and Neighborhood Disorganization

Communities are believed to play a key role in nurturing their residents by providing values and morals youths need for positive growth and development. Empirical research supports the notion that the impact of social relationships on youths varies by type of relationship (e.g. familial, friendship, neighborhood) and type of community. For example, it has been found that disorganized communities (i.e., impoverished, un-policed, and un-supervised) negatively affect the ability of social relationships to reduce problematic behavior (Hoffman, 2003). When communities are socially disorganized, it is reasonable to believe that juveniles would be rendered susceptible to peers and situations that promote delinquency. Social disorganization research is built on the notion that well developed, local network structures (e.g., local police, neighbors, schools) reduce crime (Bellair, 1997).

Communities with extensive social networks are assumed to be more integrated and cohesive and the residents more likely to engage in informal surveillance and to intervene in disturbances. The framework assumes that residents of communities with large, interconnected, and active social networks have a greater capacity to supervise social activity within neighborhoods and socialize children and other residents towards conventional values (Bellair, 1997; Shaw & McKay, 1942). Sampson and Wilson (1995) argue being isolated, both culturally and socially, combined with concentrated

disadvantage, can create sub-cultural adaptations where problematic behaviors are tolerated or expected as a part of daily life. Being immersed in such a disorganized environment most likely would encourage youths to conform to the individuals who are also under these intense circumstances, particularly minorities who are much more likely to be victims of concentrated disadvantage. Under this situation, it could be posited that Black youths exposed to this concentrated disadvantage would be more susceptible to the influence of their peers.

It has been suggested that disorganized communities have weak institutional controls that lead to unsupervised adolescent groups, in which delinquent traditions are culturally transmitted to younger peers from older peers (Matsueda & Anderson, 1998). McNulty and Bellair (2003) maintain that social disorganization perspectives suggest racial or ethnic differences in violence reflect the relative exposure of groups to inherent, criminally conducive conditions. A potential criminogenic structural condition could be the relative exposure of certain races to violent peer networks. The weakening controls of the community only serve to strengthen the potential influence of peer groups. If minorities are more likely to reside in socially disorganized communities where peer networks are much more influential, then a result could be that similar levels of differential association and economic disadvantage may have a much more profound impact on Blacks than Whites.

Street Glamour, Discrimination, and the "Code of the Street"

It has been posited that delinquent peers have little or no effect on deviant behavior in some circumstances but an enormous effect in others (Agnew, 1991).

Research suggests that individuals may be affected by a subculture of violence even though they have not internalized values that promote violence because group effects can operate independently of individuals' own values (Felson, Liska, South, & McNulty, 2004). Contemporary theories of crime posit a set of conditions (e.g. inept parenting, lack of self control, weak social bonds, limited economy, violent subculture) that serve to increase the probability of criminal involvement. These theories assume that ethnic and racial differences in crime are explained by group differences in the exposure to these criminogenic conditions (Simons, Chen, Stewart, & Brody, 2003). Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime argues that racial group membership does not inherently suggest causal significance (See also Vazsonyi & Crosswhite, 2004). Although race may not have an independent causal influence, certain races have been found to differentially be exposed to disadvantaged circumstances that potentially could make similar levels of differential association more influential to certain races than others.

Felson, et al. (2004) suggest that self-presentation or impression management is also an important aspect of social control. When individuals are attacked or wronged an aggressive retaliation may be expected as a means of saving face or maintaining "honor". Cairns, et al. (1988) similarly describe the idea of "social rejection" and the notion that fear of being rejected by your social network could motivate problematic behavior to remain a socially accepted member of the peer network. A popular theory of social rejection, Anderson's "Code of the Street" theory, pertains to the social environment of inner city Philadelphia youth. It suggests that a way in which youths can be rendered

susceptible to peer influence is if mutual peers are engaging in a life that is perceived by other youths as glamorous or necessary.

Anderson (1990) argues that the ghetto street culture can be glamorous and seductive to adolescents, promising its followers the chance of being "hip" and popular with certain "cool" peers who hang out on the streets. Street smart young people who operate in underground economies (e.g. drug trade, extortion, and street hustling) are apparently able to obtain large amounts of money more easily and glamorously than their elders. This street success may serve as the defining attribute of street role models for younger people (Anderson, 1990). Therefore youths who are immersed in such a context may be more susceptible to the influence of their older peers. In this context, delinquent peers could have a greater impact on Blacks than Whites. Lives of street-oriented youths are often marked by disorganization (Anderson, 1999). Further, street-oriented youths can be said at times to mount a coercive effort to keep their decent counterparts from "selling out". This occurs because street families live solely by a code of the street and actively socialize children to adhere to this code (Anderson, 1999; Stewart & Simons, 2006).

Klein (1971) observed that problematic peers do not come together because they share interests or values, but because they share poverty, unhappy homes, and lack of acceptance. Anderson (1999) acknowledges that family characteristics, neighborhood context, and particularly racial discrimination, with its resulting perceptions of helplessness and despair, are significant predictors of the street code. Feelings of despair are likely to render juveniles susceptible to the negative influence of peers who share this same despair and provide some semblance of comfort and reassurance. Arguably, race

and violence could be related in a context that suggests differential association could have a greater influence on Blacks than Whites in terms of violence. These social contexts arguably could make peer influence more magnified.

It is important to note that an alternative to the interaction of race and differential association could be an interaction between socioeconomic status and race. Paschall, et al. (1998) found that impacts of violent behavior from being socioeconomically disadvantaged were clearly more profound for Black young adults than Whites. The strains of being economically disadvantaged could affect races in different, yet distinct ways that may create completely different behavioral responses. Arguably, an interaction of race and socioeconomic status could illustrate that similar levels of economic disadvantage could have more of an influence on Blacks than Whites in terms of fostering violent behavior.

Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to focus on the influence of peer associations that may explain the disproportional rates of violence and crime that exist among racial groups. Youths form bonds and peer associations through forms of "social embeddedness" where they learn to behave in certain ways. Minority youths may become involved in negative peer networks because they lack informal social control or parental guidance. This lack of informal social control may derive from social disorganization and structural disadvantage of communities in which the youths reside. As a result, youths (minority youths in particular), may begin to glamorize and admire peers who present a façade of status in the neighborhood. This status is often achieved

through illegitimate or delinquent means. Consequently, in order to survive in that environment it becomes necessary to conform to the dominant, albeit negative, ways which include engaging in violent behavior.

Based on this theoretical reasoning this study asserts that first, socioeconomic status will mediate racial differences in violent delinquency. Second, differential association will mediate racial differences in violent delinquency. Third, that socioeconomic status will moderate the relationship between race and violent delinquency such that the race-violence relation will be strongest for those of lower socioeconomic status. Fourthly, that differential association will moderate the relationship between race and violent delinquency such that race and violence will be most related among those with increased delinquent friends. Lastly, an interaction effect will exist between socioeconomic status and differential association that low socioeconomic status and high levels of differential association will each increase magnitude of the other's association with violence.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Data

Data for this study comes from the National Youth Survey (NYS), a continuing longitudinal study of deviant behavior among a national sample of 1,725 respondents aged 11 to 17 in 1976. The NYS sample was obtained through a multistage probability sampling of households in the continental United States (Elliot, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985). In each wave of the study respondents were asked a series of questions about events and behaviors from the preceding year (Mears, Ploeger, & Warr, 1998). In this present analysis, data comes from Wave I of the NYS (N= 1,725) which captured the respondents during the period of adolescence (ages 11 to 17) and Wave II of the NYS (N= 1,725) which captured the respondents during the period of adolescence (ages 12 to 18).

The NYS collects self-report data on a wide range of delinquent behaviors, using the general question, "How many times in the last year have you [act]?" In addition to their own behavior, respondents are asked questions about friends they "ran around with," and who they are requested to think of whenever answering questions about peers (Mears et al., 1998). For the purpose of this study, the variable of interest is peer delinquency in which respondents are asked the question, "think of your friends, during the last year how many of them [act]?" (1= none of them; 2= very few of them; 3= some of them; 4= most of them; 5= all of them). Also important was the respondents' moral

analysis of their peers' acts, which is found in the respondents answering the question, "to what extent would your peers disapprove of you engaging in [act]?" (1=Strongly disapprove; 2=Disapprove; 3=Neither; 4=Approve; 5= Strongly approve).

The NYS collects data on a wide range of offenses from substance abuse to violent crime. For this particular study, it will be necessary to avoid substance abuse and focus primarily on violent behavior so that peer violence and respondents own violence can be used to determine whether racial differences in violence are mediated and or moderated by peer association.

Measures

The predictor variables presented in this study are race, socioeconomic status and differential association variables. Race was recoded as 0 and 1 to compare Blacks to the rest of the non-Black populations.

Differential Association. The differential association scale consists of perceived peer approval and exposure to peers engaged in violent behavior. The perceived peer approval items were coded from 1 to 5 (1=Strongly disapprove; 2=Disapprove; 3=Neither; 4=Approve; 5= Strongly approve). Exposure to peers engaging in violent behavior items is on a scale from 1 to 5 where respondents are asked to recall how many of their peers engage in a specific behavior (1=None of them; 2=Very few of them; 3=Some of them; 4=None of them; 5=All of them). In both cases, violent behavior was identified by items that included the "destruction of property" and "hitting someone". The four items collapsed to create the differential association scale are: "During the last year how many of your friends destroyed property", "To what extent would your peers

disapprove of you destroying property", "During the last year how many of your friends hit someone", and "To what extent would your peers disapprove of you hitting someone". A factor analysis was performed and results suggest that both items load into one factor (i.e. differential association) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Factor Analysis, 1976

	Initial	Extraction
Att. toward destroy	1.000	.582
Friends destroy	1.000	.447
Attitude toward hitting	1.000	.608
Friends hitting	1.000	.467

Control Variables. Sex and age are control variables because Steffensmeier and Streifel (1991) suggest two of the oldest and most extensively recognized conclusions in criminology are that participation in crime decreases with age and that males are much more likely than females to offend at every age (see also Parmelee, 1918; Quetelet, 1831; Sutherland & Cressey, 1978). Sex was coded as 0 and 1 (0=male; 1=female) and age was represented in years.

Socioeconomic Status. Socioeconomic status of the youths' families was measured using the Hollingshead Index, which provides two ordinal scales consisting of occupational and educational categories with rankings from 1 through 7. Lower scores indicate greater occupational and educational status (1=executives/professional degrees; 7=unskilled workers/less than 7 years education) (Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958).

Self-Reported Violent Delinquency. Self-reported violence was measured by asking participants to report the frequency and rate to which they: attacked someone, hit a

teacher, hit a parent, and hit a student (1=Never; 2=once/twice a year; 3=once every 2-3 months; 4=once a month; 5=once every 2-3 weeks; 6=once a week; 7=2-3 times a week; 8=once a day; 9=2-3 times a day). These items were summed to create a total delinquency score. The natural logs of the delinquency variables for Wave I and II were computed to reduce the skewness of the self-reported incidences. A series of T-tests were run to show the four items used in the self-reported delinquency score. These items were chosen based on their severity of the behavior and the disparities in the means between Blacks and Whites. Tables 2-6 display descriptive statistics for all variables and participant frequencies for race and sex in the study.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
SES	1623	11.00	77.00	43.9156	16.55003
Sex	1683	.00	1.00	.9245	.26421
Age	1683	2.00	7.00	3.6322	.77695
Dif. assoc 76	1480	4.00	17.00	7.5149	2.43699
Dif. assoc 77	1486	4.00	19.00	7.3163	2.38843
RacexSES 76	1647	-1.99	2.00	.0843	.37565
RacexDifassoc 76	1630	-1.44	3.48	.0160	.33540
RacexDifassoc 77	1627	-1.39	4.47	.0124	.34056
SESxDif.assoc 76	1397	-4.65	5.49	.0813	.94858
SESxDif.assoc 77	1411	-5.37	7.86	.0492	.97886
Delinquency 76	1725	1.39	3.58	1.6002	.30614
Delinquency 77	1646	1.39	3.04	1.5522	.24751
Valid N (listwise)	1247				

Table 3. Race Frequencies 1976

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	White	1333	77.3	79.2	79.2
	Black	248	14.4	14.7	93.9
	Hispanic	80	4.6	4.8	98.7
	Native	2	.1	.1	98.8
	Asian	16	.9	1.0	99.8
	Other	4	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	1683	97.6	100.0	
Miss.	99.00	42	2.4		
Total		1725	100.0		

Table 4. Sex Frequencies 1976

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	127	7.4	7.5	7.5
	Female	1556	90.2	92.5	100.0
	Total	1683	97.6	100.0	
Miss.	System	42	2.4		
Total		1725	100.0		

Table 5. Race Frequencies 1977

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	White	1361	78.9	78.9	78.9
	Black	260	15.1	15.1	94.0
	Hispanic	76	4.4	4.4	98.4
	Native	8	.5	.5	98.8
	Asian	17	1.0	1.0	99.8
	Other	3	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	1725	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Sex Frequencies 1977

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	918	53.2	53.2	53.2
	Female	807	46.8	46.8	100.0
	Total	1725	100.0	100.0	

Analytical Strategy. Several regression models were estimated to analyze the mediating and moderating influences of differential association on racial disparities in youth violence. Baron and Kenny (1986) suggest that a given variable may be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion variables. Moderation implies that the relation between two variables changes as a function of the moderator variable. For the purpose of this study, the mediating and or moderating variables are socioeconomic status and differential association.

Prior to analyzing the interaction effects, the non-dummy variables (i.e. differential association, Hollingshead index, age) were standardized to reduce collinearity. Collinearity is a concern because the variables could be so highly correlated that it would be impossible to come up with reliable results based on individual regression coefficients (Aiken & West, 1991). The computed race variable was then multiplied by the standardized differential association variable as well as the standardized socioeconomic status variable. This allowed for the creation of two multiplicative interaction terms involving race and differential association, and race and socioeconomic status.

The results are a cross-sectional analyses where results are replicated at two given points in time, one being from 1976 (Wave I of NYS) and one being from 1977

(Wave II of NYS) to strengthen reliability of the results. This study examines these effects from cross-sectional analyses due to the fact that controlling for prior delinquency essentially may wash out the effect of race. A longitudinal analysis was not justified because saying Blacks are more violent at time two because they were more violent at time one does address the racial disparity discussion presented in this study.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

To test whether race significantly predicts violent delinquency in adolescents and whether socioeconomic status, controlling for age and sex, mediates the relation between race and violence, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which race was entered in the first step, the control variables of age and sex in the second step, and socioeconomic status in the third step. All three steps were found to be a statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1617) = 3.55; $p < .05$), (R^2= .01, F(3, 1615) = 3.92; $p < .01$) and (R^2= .01, F(4, 1614) = 5.48; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was found to be a significant predictor of delinquency ($t(1617) = 1.88, p < .05$). In Step 2 age was a statistically significant predictor of violence ($t(1617) = -2.86, p < .01$), but sex was not found to be a significant predictor of delinquency ($t(1617) = -.547, p > .05$). Finally, in Step 3, socioeconomic status was found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1617) = 3.18, p \leq .001$). More importantly, because race was no longer a significant predictor of violent delinquency once socioeconomic status was added in Step 3, socioeconomic status fully mediates the relationship between race and violence (see Table 7). The predictive strength of the model is low showing that race in Step 1 accounts for .2 percent of the variance while predictors in Step 2 and Step 3 account for 1 percent of the variance respectively.

An additional hierarchical regression model was estimated to test whether differential association, controlling for age and sex, mediates the relation between race

and violent delinquency in adolescents. All three steps were found to be statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1444) = 5.13; $p < .05$), (R^2= .01, F(3, 1442) = 4.15; $p < .01$), and (R^2= .20, F(4, 1441) = 92.16; $p < .001$). In Step 1 race was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1444) = 2.27, p < .05$). In Step 2 once again age was a statistically significant predictor of violence ($t(1444) = -2.67, p < .01$), but sex was not found to be a significant predictor of delinquency ($t(1444) = -.730, p > .05$). Finally, in Step 3 differential association was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1444) = 18.79, p < .001$). However, more importantly, in Step 3 race remained a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1444) = 1.72$, $p < .05$) suggesting that the relation between race and violent delinquency is not mediated by differential association (see Table 7). The predictive strength of the model is low in Step 1 with race accounting for .4 percent of the variance, and low in Step 2 accounting for 1 percent of the variance, and only moderate in Step 3 with differential association accounting for 20 percent of the variance.

To test whether race significantly predicts violent delinquency in adolescents and whether socioeconomic status, controlling for age and sex, moderates the relation between race and delinquency, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which race was entered in the first step, the control variables of age and sex as well as socioeconomic status in the second step, and the socioeconomic interaction term in the third step. All three steps were found to be statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1617) = 3.55; $p < .05$), (R^2= .01, F(4, 1614) = 5.48; $p < .001$), and (R^2= .01, F(5, 1613) = 4.39; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1617) = 1.88, p < .05$). In Step 2, sex was not found to be a

statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1617) = -.620, p > .05$), but age and socioeconomic status were found to be significant predictors of violent delinquency ($t(1617) = -2.83, p < .01$) and ($t(1617) = 3.18, p < .01$) respectively. Finally, in step 3, the race by socioeconomic status interaction term was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1617) = -.196, p > .05$) (see Table 8). The predictive strength of the model is low, showing that race in Step 1 only accounts for .2 percent of the variance while the predictors in both Step 2 and Step 3 account for 1 percent of the variance respectively.

An additional hierarchical regression model was estimated to test whether differential association, controlling for age and sex, moderates the relation between race and violent delinquency in adolescents. All three steps were found to be statistically significant ($R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 1444) = 5.13$; $p < .05$), ($R^2 = .20$, $F(4, 1441) = 92.16$; $p < .001$), and ($R^2 = .20$, $F(5, 1440) = 74.42$; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1444) = 2.27, p < .05$). In Step 2, sex was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1440) = -1.03, p > .05$), but age and differential association were found to be statistically significant predictors of violent delinquency ($t(1440) = -2.21, p < .05$) and ($t(1440) = 18.79, p < .001$) respectively. Finally, in Step 3, the race by differential association interaction term was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1440) = -1.72, p < .05$). More importantly, the results in Step 3 suggest that the relation between race and violent delinquency is moderated by differential association (see Table 8). The predictive strength of this model was low in Step 1 with

race accounting for .4 percent of the variance, and moderate in Step 2 and Step 3 accounting for 20 percent and 21 percent of the variance respectively.

To test whether race significantly predicts violent delinquency in adolescents and whether an interaction effect exists between socioeconomic status and differential association, controlling for age and sex, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which race was entered in the first step, the control variables of age and sex as well as socioeconomic status and differential association in the second step, and socioeconomic status by differential association interaction term in the third step. All three steps were found to be statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1392) = 6.81; $p < .01$), (R^2= .20, F(5, 1388) = 71.67; $p < .001$), and (R^2= .20, F(6, 1387) = 59.82; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1392) = 2.61$; $p < .01$). In Step 2 age, socioeconomic status, and differential association were found to be statistically significant ($t(1392) = -2.05$; $p < .05$), ($t(1392) = 2.56$; $p < .01$), and ($t(1392) = 18.05$; $p < .001$) respectively. Sex was not found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1392) = -1.07$; $p > .05$). Finally, in Step 3 the socioeconomic status by differential association interaction term was not found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1392) = -.83$; $p > .05$). The result in Step 3 suggests that no interaction effect exists between socioeconomic status and differential association (see Table 11). The predictive strength of the model was low in Step 1 with race accounting for .4 percent of the variance, but moderate in Step 2 and Step 3 accounting for 20 percent of the variance respectively.

To further reliability, the previous results from the 1976 cohort were replicated to test whether socioeconomic status and differential association mediate and or moderate

the relationship between race and violent delinquency in the 1977 cohort. To test whether race significantly predicts violent delinquency in adolescents and whether socioeconomic status, controlling for age and sex, mediates the relation between race and violence, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which race was entered in the first step, the control variables of age and sex in the second step, and socioeconomic status in the third step. Step 1 was not found to be a statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1553) = 2.12; $p > .05$), but Step 2 and Step 3 were statistically significant (R^2= .01, F(3, 1551) = 4.38; $p < .01$) and (R^2= .02, F(4, 1550) = 6.88; $p < .001$) respectively. In step 1 race was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = 1.46, p > .05$). Although it was not statistically significant, an overwhelming amount of prior research suggests a significant relationship between race and violence. In Step 1 race was approaching significance ($p = .07$) and the results of this step could have been influenced by members in the sample being left out of Step 1 due to the fact that they had missing data and were left out of both Step 2 and Step 3. In Step 2, both sex and age were found to be statistically significant predictors of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = -2.32, p < .05$) and ($t(1553) = -2.69, p < .01$) respectively. Finally, in Step 3, socioeconomic status was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = 3.78, p < .001$). However, more importantly the fact that race was very near approaching statistical significance in Step 1, and race was a highly non-significant predictor of violent delinquency in Step 3, the relation between race and violent delinquency is said to be mediated by socioeconomic status (see Table 9). The predictive strength of the model is low with race in Step 1 accounting for .1 percent of the

variance, while predictors in Step 2 and Step 3 account for 1 percent and 2 percent of the variance respectively.

An additional hierarchical regression model was performed to test whether differential association, controlling for age and sex, mediates the relation between race and violent delinquency in adolescents. All three steps were found to be statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1450) = 3.38; $p < .05$), (R^2= .01, F(3, 1448) = 4.55; $p < .01$) and (R^2= .27, F(4, 1447) = 131.98; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1450) = 1.84, p < .05$). In Step 2 age and sex was found to be statistically significant predictors of violence ($t(1450) = -2.31, p < .05$) and ($t(1450) = -2.52, p < .01$) respectively. Finally, in Step 3 differential association was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1450) = 22.57, p < .001$). More importantly, because in Step 1 race was a significant predictor of violent delinquency, but in Step 3 race was non-significant, this suggests the relation between race and violent delinquency is mediated by differential association (see Table 9). The predictive strength of the model was low in Step 1 with race accounting for .2 percent of the variance, low in Step 2 accounting for 1 percent of the variance and moderate in Step 3 with differential association accounting for 27 percent of the variance.

To test whether race significantly predicts violent delinquency in adolescents and whether socioeconomic status, controlling for age and sex, moderates the relation between race and delinquency, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which race was entered in the first step, the control variables of age and sex as well as socioeconomic status in the second step, and the socioeconomic interaction term in the third step. Step 1 was not found to be statistically significant (R^2= .00, F(1, 1553) = 2.12;

$p > .05$), but Step 2 and Step 3 were found to be statistically significant ($R^2 = .02$, $F(4, 1550) = 6.88$; $p < .001$) and ($R^2 = .01$, $F(5, 1549) = 5.56$; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = 1.46, p > .05$). Although it was not statistically significant, an overwhelming amount of prior research suggests a significant relationship between race and violence. In Step 1 race was approaching significance ($p = .07$) and the results of this step could have been influenced by members in the sample being left out of Step 1 due to the fact that they had missing data and were left out of both Step 2 and Step 3. In Step 2, sex, age, and socioeconomic status was found to be statistically significant predictors of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = -2.39, p < .01$), ($t(1553) = -2.61, p < .01$), and ($t(1553) = 3.78, p < .001$) respectively. Finally, in Step 3, the race by socioeconomic status interaction term was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = .528, p > .05$). More importantly, the result shown in Step 3 suggests that the relation between race and violent delinquency is not moderated by socioeconomic status (see Table 10). The predictive strength of the model is low with race in Step 1 accounting for .1 percent of the variance, and predictors of Step 2 and Step 3 accounting for 2 percent and 1 percent of the variance respectively.

An additional hierarchical regression model was performed to test whether differential association, controlling for age and sex, moderates the relation between race and violent delinquency in adolescents. All three steps was found to be statistically significant ($R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 1450) = 3.38$; $p < .05$), ($R^2 = .27$, $F(4, 1447) = 131.98$; $p < .001$) and ($R^2 = .27$, $F(5, 1446) = 105.85$; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = 1.84, p < .05$). In

Step 2, sex and differential association was found to be a statistically significant predictors of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = -1.96, p < .05$), and ($t(1553) = 22.57, p < .001$) respectively. Age was not found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = -.92, p > .05$) . Finally, in Step 3, the race by differential association interaction term was not found to be a statistically significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1553) = -1.11, p > .05$) suggesting that the relation between race and violent delinquency is not moderated by differential association (see Table 10). The predictive strength of the model is low in Step 1 with race accounting for .2 percent of the variance, but moderate in Step 2 and Step 3 accounting for 27 percent of the variance.

To test whether race significantly predicts violent delinquency in adolescents and whether an interaction effect exists between socioeconomic status and differential association, controlling for age and sex, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which race was entered in the first step, the control variables of age and sex as well as socioeconomic status and differential association in the second step, and socioeconomic status by differential association interaction term in the third step. Step 1 was not found to be statistically significant ($R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 1402) = 2.10$; $p > .05$), but Step 2 and Step 3 was found to be statistically significant ($R^2 = .27$, $F(5, 1398) = 104.24$; $p < .001$), and ($R^2 = .27$, $F(6, 1397) = 88.60$; $p < .001$) respectively. In Step 1 race was not found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1402) = 1.45$; $p > .05$). Although it was not statistically significant, an overwhelming amount of prior research suggests a significant relationship between race and violence. In Step 1 race was approaching significance ($p = .07$) and the results of this step could have been influenced by members in the sample being left out of Step 1 due to the fact that they had missing data and were

left out of both Step 2 and Step 3. In Step 2 sex, socioeconomic status, and differential association was found to be statistically significant ($t(1402) = -2.15$; $p < .05$), ($t(1402) = 3.64$; $p < .001$), and ($t(1402) = 21.99$; $p < .001$) respectively. Age was not found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1402) = -.98$; $p > .05$). Finally, in Step 3 the socioeconomic status by differential association interaction term was found to be a significant predictor of violent delinquency ($t(1402) = 2.80$; $p < .01$). More importantly, this suggests that there is an interaction effect between socioeconomic status and differential association (see Table 11). The predictive strength of the model is low in Step 1 with race accounting for .1 percent of the variance, but moderate in Step 2 and Step 3 accounting for 27 percent of the variance.

Table 7

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Mediating Youth Violence 1976 Cohort (Model 1 N = 1619; Model 2 N = 1446)

Model 1				Model 2			
Variable	B	SE B	β	Variable	B	SE B	β
Step 1				**Step 1**			
Race	0.04	0.02	.05*	Race	0.05	0.02	.06*
Step 2				**Step 2**			
Race	0.05	0.02	.05*	Race	0.05	0.02	.07**
Sex	0.15	0.03	.58	Sex	0.02	0.03	.02
Age	0.03	0.01	.07**	Age	0.03	0.01	.07**
Step 3				**Step 3**			
Race	0.03	0.02	.03	Race	0.03	0.02	.04*
Sex	0.02	0.03	.02	Sex	0.03	0.03	.03
Age	0.03	0.01	.07**	Age	0.02	0.01	.05*
SES	0.00	0.00	.08**	Difasoc	0.05	0.00	.44***

Note. R^2 = .002 for model 1, step 1; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 1, step 2; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 1, step 3; R^2 = .004 for model 2, step 1; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 2, step 2; ΔR^2 = .20 for model 2, step 3. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001 (one-tailed)

Table 8

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Moderating Youth Violence 1976 Cohort (Model 1 N = 1619; Model 2 N = 1446)

Model 1				Model 2			
Variable	B	SE B	β	Variable	B	SE B	β
Step 1				**Step 1**			
Race	0.14	0.07	.05*	Race	0.16	0.07	.06*
Step 2				**Step 2**			
Race	0.09	0.07	.03	Race	0.11	0.06	.04*
Sex	0.06	0.09	.02	Sex	0.09	0.08	.03
Age	0.07	0.03	.07**	Age	0.05	0.02	.05*
SES	0.08	0.03	.08**	Difasoc	0.41	0.02	.44***
Step 3				**Step 3**			
Race	0.11	0.09	.03	Race	0.12	0.06	.05*
Sex	0.06	0.09	.02	Sex	0.09	0.08	.02
Age	0.07	0.03	.07**	Age	0.05	0.02	.05*
SES	0.08	0.03	.08**	Difasoc	0.42	0.02	.46***
Race x SES	0.02	0.08	.01	Race x Difasoc	0.11	0.07	.04*

Note. R^2 = .002 for model 1, step 1; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 1, step 2; ΔR^2 = .00 for model 1, step 3; R^2 = .004 for model 2, step 1; ΔR^2 = .20 for model 2, step 2; ΔR^2 = .002 for model 2, step 3. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001 (one-tailed).

Table 9

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Mediating Youth Violence 1977 Cohort (Model 1 N = 1555; Model 2 N = 1452)

Model 1				Model 2			
Variable	B	SE B	β	Variable	B	SE B	β
Step 1				**Step 1**			
Race	0.03	0.02	.04	Race	0.04	0.02	.05*
Step 2				**Step 2**			
Race	0.03	0.04	.04*	Race	0.04	0.02	.05*
Sex	0.06	0.02	.06*	Sex	0.06	0.03	.07**
Age	0.02	0.01	.07**	Age	0.02	0.01	.06*
Step 3				**Step 3**			
Race	0.01	0.02	.01	Race	0.02	0.02	.03
Sex	0.06	0.02	.06*	Sex	0.04	0.02	.05*
Age	0.02	0.01	.07**	Age	0.01	0.01	.02
SES	0.00	0.00	.10***	Difasoc	0.05	0.00	.51***

Note. R^2 = .001 for model 1, step 1; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 1, step 2; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 1, step 3; R^2 = .002 for model 2, step 1; ΔR^2 = .01 for model 2, step 2; ΔR^2 = .26 for model 2, step 3. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001. (one-tailed).

Table 10

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Moderating Youth Violence 1977 Cohort (Model 1 N = 1555; Model 2 N = 1452)

Model 1				Model 2			
Variable	B	SE B	β	Variable	B	SE B	β
Step 1				**Step 1**			
Race	0.11	0.08	.04	Race	0.14	0.08	.05*
Step 2				**Step 2**			
Race	0.04	0.08	.01	Race	0.08	0.07	.03
Sex	0.23	0.11	.06*	Sex	0.17	0.09	.05*
Age	0.07	0.03	.07**	Age	0.02	0.02	.02
SES	0.11	0.03	.11***	Difasoc	0.52	0.02	.51***
Step 3				**Step 3**			
Race	0.02	0.09	.01	Race	0.08	0.07	.03
Sex	0.23	0.09	.06*	Sex	0.17	0.09	.05*
Age	0.07	0.03	.07**	Age	0.02	0.02	.02
SES	0.09	0.03	.09***	Difasoc	0.51	0.02	.51***
Race x SES	0.05	0.09	.02	Race x Difasoc	0.08	0.07	.03

Note. R^2 = .001 for model 1, step 1; ΔR^2 = .02 for model 1, step 2; ΔR^2 = .00 for model 1, step 3; R^2 = .00 2 for model 2, step 1; ΔR^2 = .27 for model 2, step 2; ΔR^2 = .001 for model 2, step 3. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001 (one-tailed).

Table 11

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for SES and Differential Association Interaction in Youth Violence 1976 Cohort (N = 1394); 1977 Cohort (N = 1404)

1976				1977			
Variable	B	SE B	β	Variable	B	SE B	β
Step 1				Step 1			
Race	0.21	0.08	.07**	Race	0.12	0.08	.04
Step 2				Step 2			
Race	0.11	0.07	.04	Race	0.01	0.07	.00
Sex	0.09	0.08	.03	Sex	0.19	0.09	.05*
Age	0.05	0.02	.05*	Age	0.03	0.03	.02
SES	0.06	0.02	.06**	SES	0.09	0.02	.09***
Difasoc	0.41	0.02	.43***	Difasoc	0.51	0.02	.50***
Step 3				Step 3			
Race	0.11	0.07	.04*	Race	0.01	0.07	.01
Sex	0.09	0.08	.03	Sex	0.21	0.09	.06*
Age	0.05	0.02	.05*	Age	0.03	0.03	.03
SES	0.06	0.02	.06**	SES	0.09	0.02	.09***
Difasoc	0.41	0.02	.44***	Difasoc	0.51	0.02	.50***
SES x Difasoc	0.02	0.02	.02	SES x Difasoc	0.07	0.02	.06**

Note. R^2 = .004 for 1976, step 1; ΔR^2 = .20 for 1976, step 2; ΔR^2 = .001 for 1976, step 3; R^2 = .001 for 1977, step 1; ΔR^2 = .27 for 1977, step 2; ΔR^2 = .00 4 for 1977, step 3. *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001 (one-tailed).

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The role of peer networks in mediating and moderating racial disparities in youth violence could have important implications for our understanding of the relationship between race and crime. There has been a breadth of research analyzing the overt racial disparities in violence (Harer & Steffensmeier, 1992; Krivo & Peterson, 2000; Messner & Golden, 1992; Parker, 2001) but the introduction of a significant peer network influence can alter the way research examines the race-violence relationship. The results of this study suggest that socioeconomic status and differential association are significant predictors of violence and in fact mediate the relationship between race and violence. Moreover, it appears that even though differential association explains the relation between race and violent delinquency in 1977, socioeconomic status provides a more reliable explanation for the race-violence association across both 1976 and 1977.

Krivo and Peterson (2000) and McNulty (2001) assessed to what degree racial disparity effects are due to inherently different social and economic situations under which Blacks and Whites live. Arguably, the results of this study show that the degree to which racial disparity effects are due to different peer network constructions is not as significant as the socioeconomic context in which Blacks and Whites are situated. Knowing this information might behoove policy makers to develop strategies to reduce violent delinquency by decreasing poverty and increasing education for youths. Economic standing and education are major aspects of socioeconomic status, and appear

to explain the relationship between race and violent delinquency. The results of this study do support the hypothesis that socioeconomic status serves as a mediating explanation to the race-violence relationship. Moreover, there is also some evidence presented that differential association does present mediating effects on the race-violence relationship and this should be further examined by future research. Furthermore, some evidence was found for the interaction of socioeconomic status and differential association suggesting that similar levels of differential association may have a greater influence on low socioeconomic status youths. The relationship between race and violence is better explained as a product of predictors within socioeconomic status, and may be better explained through a traditional strain theory perspective.

Agnew (2001) attempted to specify strain factors that ultimately lead to delinquent behavior, particularly when these strains are seen as debilitating, pervasive, and unjust. When these strain factors result in anger, the requisite effects on deviant behavior are much more apparent (Agnew, 2001). Having an under-privileged, static socioeconomic status could lead to anger among highly disadvantaged Black youths and consequently could encourage youths' to seek out delinquent peers who share these similar strains.

Limitations to the study include the inherent methodological concern in using self-report data. When using self-report data it is always the possibility that the information inaccurately reflects the population due to erroneous or exaggerated reporting (particularly among youth respondents). Also, it is always difficult when addressing peer network influence to make assumptions about whether the peer group socialized the deviant individual, or whether the deviant individual seeks access to

delinquent peer groups. Espelage, Holt, and Hengel (2003) asserted that individuals with similar demographic and behavioral attributes are thought to be attracted to one another; at the same time, individuals are thought to become more like each other through frequent interaction. These two ideas are known as selective association versus reciprocal socialization, respectively (Espelage, Holt, & Hengel, 2003). Also, another limitation could be the operational definitions of the differential association items due to the fact that they consist of self-reported delinquency and peer perception, limited the objectivity.

Several statistical shortcomings could have occurred, particularly with the predictors of race, age and sex. Plausibly the predictors of race and sex that were not statistical significant could be a result of the disproportional sample size in those respective items (e.g. having more Whites than Blacks). Odd statistical results regarding age not being a significant predictor of violent behavior could be a statistical anomaly. Prior research finds a reliable relationship between age and crime, but in the results from a longitudinal study on youth crime, Lauritsen (1998) found that regardless of individuals' age at first interviews, self-reported involvement in crime declined significantly over the subsequent four year period of the study.

Further research should be conducted to modify the differential association-race-violence relationship by potentially looking at specific influences of peer networks on the individual (e.g. what aspects of an individual are affected the greatest by peer networks: their attitudes, behaviors, or perhaps an interaction of differential association and self-control where peer networks influence attitudes and self-control facilitates the behavior). Furthermore, a closer examination of the interaction effects between

socioeconomic status and differential association might be beneficial for future research since results were unable to be replicated in this study. It is plausible that youths seek out peer networks that share similar strains in socioeconomic status in order to have peers they can relate their status struggles to.

In sum, socioeconomic status and differential association are correlated with violent behavior and do appear to mediate the race-violence relationship. Socioeconomic status provides a more reliable explanation for racial disparities in youth violence. Also, similar levels of differential association did not reliably show a greater impact on low socioeconomic status youths than high socioeconomic status youths. Ultimately the impact of socioeconomic status seemingly is a more profound explanation of the race-violence association, more so than the peer networks in which races reside.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Agnew, R. (1991). The interactive effects of peer variables on delinquency. *Criminology, 29(1)*, 47-72.

Agnew, R. (2001). Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 38(4)*, 319-361.

Aiken, L.S. & West, S.G. (1991). *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the Streets: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Aseltine, R.H. (1995). A reconsideration of parental and peer influences on adolescent deviance. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 36(2)*, 103-121.

Baron, R.M. & Kenny, D.A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51(6)*, 1173-1182.

Bellair, P.E. (1997). Social interaction and community crime: Examining the importance of neighbor networks. *Criminology, 35(4)*, 677-704.

Bernard, T.J. (1990). Angry aggression among truly disadvantage. *Criminology, 28*, 73-96.

Blau, J.R. & Blau, P.M. (1982). The cost of inequality: Metropolitan structure and violent crime. *American Sociological Review*, 47, 114-129.

Cairns, R.B., Cairns, B.D., Neckerman, H.J., Gest, S.D., & Gariepy, J.L. (1988). Social networks and aggressive behavior: Peer support or peer rejection? *Developmental Psychology, 24(6)*, 815-823.

Cao, L., Adams, A., & Jensen, V.J. (1997). A test of the black subculture of violence thesis: A research note. *Criminology, 35(2)*, 367-379.

Elliott, D., Huizinga, D., & Ageton, S.S. (1985). *Explaining Delinquency and Drug Use.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Elliott, D. (1994). Serious violent offenders: Onset, developmental course, and termination- The American Society of Criminology address. *Criminology, 32,* 1-21.

Espelage, D.L., Holt, M.K., & Henkel, R.R. (2003). Examination of peer-group contextual effects on aggression during early adolescence. *Child Development, 74(1),* 205-220.

Felson, R.B., Liska, A.E., South, S.J., & McNulty, T.L. (2004). The subculture of violence and delinquency: Individual versus school context effects. *Social Forces, 73(1),* 155-173.

Harer, D.M. & Steffensmeier, D. (1992). The differing effects of economic inequality on black and White rates of violence. *Social Forces, 70,* 1035-1054.

Hawkins, D. (1990). Explaining the black homicide rate. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 5,* 151-163.

Hawkins, D. (1993). Inequality, culture, and interpersonal violence. *Health Affairs, 12,* 80-95.

Haynie, D.L. (2001). Delinquent peers revisited: Does network structure matter? *American Journal of Sociology, 106(4),* 1013-1057.

Haynie, D.L. (2002). Friendship networks and delinquency: The relative nature of peer delinquency. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 18(2),* 99-134.

Haynie, D.L. & Osgood, D.W. (2005). Reconsidering peers and delinquency: How do peers matter? *Social Forces, 84(2),* 1109-1130.

Haynie, D.L. & Payne, D.C. (2006). Race, friendship networks, and delinquency. *Criminology, 44(4),* 775-805.

Haynie, D.L., Silver, E., & Teasdale, B. (2006). Neighborhood characteristics, peer networks, and adolescent violence. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 22,* 147-169.

Heimer, K., & Matsueda, R.L. (1994). Role taking, role commitment, and delinquency: A theory of differential social control. *American Sociological Review, 59(3),* 365-390.

Huizinga, D., Weilier, A.W., Menard, S., Espiritu, R., & Esbensen, F. (1998, November). Some not so boring findings from Denver Youth Survey. Paper presented at

American Society of Criminology meeting, Washington, DC.

Hoffman, J.P. (2003). A contextual analysis of differential association, social control, and strain theories of delinquency. *Social Forces, 81(3)*, 753-785.

Hollingshead, A.B. & Redlich, R.C. (1958). *Social class and mental illness: A community study*. New York: Wiley.

Klein, M. (1971). *Street Gangs and Street Workers*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Krivo, L.J. & Peterson, R.D. (2000). The structural context of homicide: Accounting for racial differences in process. *American Sociological Review, 65*, 547-559.

Lauritsen, J.L. (1998). The age-crime debate: Assessing the limits of longitudinal self-report data. *Social Forces, 77(1)*, 127-155.

Loeber, R., Farrington, D.P., Stouthamer-Loeber, M., Moffitt, T., & Caspi, A. (1998). The development of male offending: Key findings from the first decade of the Pittsburgh youth study. *Studies in Crime and Crime Prevention, 7*, 141-172.

Luckenbill, D.F. & Doyle, D.P. (1989). Structural position and violence: Developing a cultural explanation. *Criminology, 27*, 801-818.

Markowitz, F.E., & Felson, R.B. (1998). Social-demographic attitudes and violence. *Criminology, 36(1)*, 117-138.

Matsueda, R.L. & Anderson, K. (1998). The dynamics of delinquent peers and delinquent behavior. *Criminology, 36(2)*, 269-308.

Matza, D. (1964). *Delinquency and Drift*. New York: Wiley.

McNulty, T.L. (2001). Assessing the race-violence relationship at the macro level: The assumption of racial invariance and the problem of restricted distribution. *Criminology, 39(2)*, 467-490.

McNulty, T.L. & Bellair, P.E. (2003). Explaining racial and ethnic differences in serious adolescent violent behavior. *Criminology, 41(3)*, 709-748.

Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mears, D.P., Ploeger, M., Warr, M. (1998). Explaining the gender gap in delinquency peer influence and moral evaluations of behavior. *Journal of Research in Crime And Delinquency, 35(3)*, 251-266.

Messner, S.F. & Golden, R.M. (1992). Racial inequality and racially disaggregated homicide rates: An assessment of alternative theoretical explanations.

Criminology, 30, 421-447.

Parker, K.F. (2001). A move toward specificity: Examining urban disadvantage and race-And relationship-specific homicide rates. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 17,* 89-110.

Parmelee, M. (1918). *Criminology.* Macmillan.

Paschall, M.J., Flewelling, R.L., & Ennett, S.T. (1998). Racial differences in violent Behavior among young adults: Moderating and confounding effects. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 35(2),* 148-165.

Quetelet, A. (1831). *Research on the propensity to crime of different ages.* Brussels: Hayez.

Sampson, R.J. & Wilson, W.J. (1995). Toward a theory of race, crime, and urban inequality. In John Hagan and Ruth Peterson (eds.), *Crime and Inequality.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Simons, R.L., Chen, Y.F., Stewart, E.A., & Brody, G.H. (2003). Incidents of discrimination and risk for delinquency: A longitudinal test of strain theory with an African American sample. *Justice Quarterly, 20(4),* 827-854.

Stewart, E.A. & Simons, R.L. (2006). Structure and culture in African American adolescent violence: A partial test of the "code of the street" thesis. *Justice Quarterly, 23(1),* 1-33.

Sutherland, E.H. (1947). *Principles of Criminology.* 4th Ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Sutherland, E.H. & Cressey, D.R. (1978). *Criminology.* 10th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Thornberry, T.P., Krohn, M.D., Lizotte, A.J., Smith, C.A., & Porter, P.K. (1998, November). Taking stock: An overview of findings from the Rochester Youth development study. Paper presented at the American Society of Criminology meeting, Washington, DC.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2000). *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics-1999.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Vazsonyi, A.T. & Crosswhite, J.M. (2004). A test of Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime in African American adolescents. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 41(4),* 407-432.

Vold, G.B. & Bernard, T.J. (1986). *Theoretical criminology.* 3d ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Warr, M. (1996). Organization and instigation in delinquent groups. *Criminology, 34(1)*, 11-37.